Robert V. Graham's
Not-So-Simple Twists of Fate

"'Greatest generation' is kind of flattery in a way. But I feel we really did something. Individually and collectively. We stepped up."

Robert V. Graham

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Seven-term Washington State Auditor (1965-1993)

Interviewed by John C. Hughes for The Legacy Project in 2014
Lloydine Graham, Robert's wife of nearly 69 years, also participated.

John Hughes, chief historian for The Legacy Project, interviews Bob Graham. Laura Mott Photo

JH: It's great to see you again, Bob. We're focusing on World War II veterans for a 2015 project on the 70th anniversary of the end of the war. I'm especially interested in your story because you were in the Army Air Forces. I'm the nephew of a B-17 waist gunner. And we both attended Grays Harbor College. One thing we should get on the record about Robert V. Graham is that not only were you elected Washington state auditor seven times, your average victory percentage was 62 percent. After you got through the primary in 1964, no one laid a glove on you.

RVG: That's right! And my two top figures were during Republican governor landslides—Dan Evans in 1964 and John Spellman in 1980.

JH: What's the "V" for in Robert V. Graham?

RVG: Vincent.

JH: I have your date of birth as April 12, 1921.

RVG: Correct.

JH: In the town of Pacific, which is up near Auburn?

RVG: Yes. Right up in the valley.

JH: Tell me about your ancestors.

RVG: My dad was Ralph Vincent Graham. His father and mother, my grandparents, were both born in the outer banks of northern Scotland in the 1850s. They first came to Sault Ste. Marie in Ontario, Canada. My grandparents, Norman and Catherine Graham, lived there a year or two. Then they moved across the strait to Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

JH: What was your grandfather's occupation?

RVG: He was in logging in Scotland, and farming when he got over here.

JH: What year did your grandfather immigrate to Canada?

RVG: Around 1877.

JH: You and Ralph Munro [the longtime secretary of state] could have worn your kilts together as two proud Scots. Did you ever take a sentimental journey back to Scotland?

RVG: We did. Lloydine [Mrs. Graham] and I went together. We spent a couple of weeks there. We got as far as Skye Island but not to the Outer Hebrides. I was still in office at the time. It was around 1992. My grandfather was a big-time farmer on the peninsula (in Michigan). But my father, Ralph V. Graham, had a cousin who

lived up in Puyallup in the valley. My father decided he wanted to come to Washington when he was 17 years. This was in the late 1880s. He and another 17-year-old friend hopped a freight train from Dafter, Michigan, headed for Seattle. They traveled across Canada. When they got about halfway across they'd stop and work in the fields for a while. But the friend decided that wasn't for him and he hopped the next train back. But my dad kept coming.

JH: What was the motivation—just a better place to be or youthful adventure?

RVG: That's all I can attribute it to because they had a nice home back there, which we visited in Dafter. It's just a little town but the train went through. Anyway, he came on out West; arrived in Seattle, then down to Sumner, where his cousin was. He was 17 and single. His cousin lived near the high school. He was walking past the school one day and saw this cute little gal over there. The first day he just said "Hi." The next day they struck up a conversation. Her name was Hazel Smith. That's my Mom.

JH: Do we know anything about her forebears?

RVG: Just that they were from Missouri. Her father was named L.T. Smith. My maternal grandmother was Elizabeth. L.T. Smith did two things in his life: He built shingle mills and he ran dairies. As a matter of fact, my grandfather built the shingle mill at Moclips on the North Beach of Grays Harbor County—a 21-machine shingle mill, the largest shingle mill in the world. That was the M.R. Smith Shingle Mill at Moclips, which opened in the late 1920s. M.R. Smith, who was from Seattle, was no relation to my grandpa, but my grandpa built the mill for him.

JH: So after your dad married Hazel Smith he gravitated into the dairy business. When did they move to Grays Harbor County?

RVG: I was just one year old. It was 1922. He was in the dairy business, first with my grandpa. Later on, my father and my brothers, Ralph, Darrell and Jim, all worked in the shingle mill. But my father first worked with my grandfather at the Riverside Dairy right down below Copalis Crossing. The Humptulips River ran right through his property. That was my granddad's dairy. When I was about 6 or 7 years old the barn burned down. We lived right across from it and the fire was so

hot it cracked all the windows in the house. My uncles, Ken and Vernon Kuhns, later on had a dairy of their own—Firland Dairy in Aberdeen.

JH: How many cows were in grandpa's herd?

RVG: I'm not sure but there must have been a lot of them because I remember it was a big barn. At least 30 or 40 cows.

JH: I read in one place that you had lived in Aberdeen as a child.

RVG: I never lived at Aberdeen. I lived at Copalis Crossing.

JH: Tell me about growing up at Copalis Crossing.

RVG: Roland Youmans, who became mayor of Hoquiam and a Grays Harbor County commissioner, was in 4-H Club with me out at the crossing. I was the Grays Harbor County 4-H swine-raising champion. Got a whole week's stay at WSU—WSC back then—in one of the dormitories. And that was really something—going to Pullman! My sister Maxine helped me raise my pigs.

JH: The Northern Pacific Railroad ran right through what was called the Wilderness District along the Humptulips River.

RVG: Ran right through our back yard!

JH: And there was a post office right there?

RVG: At Copalis Crossing. Jack Lewis's dad's store was there too.
Jack's family was a lot more affluent than we were. They had indoor plumbing.

JH: You kids all swam in the Humptulips River. Did you ever have any swimming lessons? How'd you learn?

RVG: You jumped in and you either swan or you sunk! As a matter of fact, we used to jump off the railroad bridge into the river.

JH: Did you kids trap critters, go fishing and dig clams?

RVG: My brother, he was the trapper, together with my Aunt Grace Smith [the future Mrs. Vernon Kuhns]. They teamed up on trapping. Muskrat. Otter. Beaver.

JH: Did you ever peel cascara bark?

RVG: Oh, man, did I ever!

JH: I kind of liked peeling cascara bark, and it was fun taking it up to Montesano to sell to the place right along the old highway into town.

RVG: I used to hate it because you could snag your fingers on those little prickles inside the bark.

JH: And you must have been clam digging fools out there so close to the beaches. Were there any limits?

RVG: For commercial digging, no. And when the tides were late, school started late.

JH: But for personal digging was there a limit then?

RVG: 32. And they were good size too.

JH: When you were a young boy did you have electricity out there at Copalis Crossing?

RVG: No, we did not. I remember when Grays Harbor Railway & Light brought the lines out. Maybe when I was around 8 [in 1929]. People would come to our house at night to listen to "Amos & Andy" because we had a radio. "Myrt & Marge" was another popular program. I can remember at night my dad he wanted to listen to the news every night. At night we could get KSL, Salt Lake City. My dad would sit there and listen to every single word. At first we had one of those big old radios. Then later on my dad got a smaller one—an "Airline" radio from Montgomery Ward.

JH: So you had an outhouse?

RVG: An outhouse. Out back!

JH: Did the Graham family have a car?

RVG: Oh yeah. In 1928 my dad bought a brand new Pontiac. This sales guy came out from town to give him a demonstration ride. We took off for Copalis Beach. And Langely Hill was up the road. In our old car we would chug up that hill and just barely make it. And that doggone Pontiac just sped right up it. I couldn't believe it.

JH: My uncle, Bill Botkin, grew up at Pacific Beach and Aloha, up the road from Copalis Crossing.

RVG: Norma Botkin was Bill's sister. My brother Ralph dated her!

JH: Proving once again that in the Northwest you'd better not say anything bad about anyone because we're all inter-related! It's the "six degrees of separation."

JH: This is a good place to have you list your brothers and sisters for us.

RVG: Ralph Leroy Graham was the oldest. Born in 1919.

JH: Better known as "Moon" or "Moonie." How'd Ralph get that nickname?

RVG: Our Uncle, Mitchell Smith, our mother's brother, gave him the nickname. There was a funny-paper called "Moon Mullins." And he called him "Moon" and that's what started it.

JH: Next comes you on April 12, 1921.

RVG: Then my sister Maxine—Maxine Campbell. Then Donald, then Jim and then Darrell, 20 years after me.

JH: Where was the elementary school you attended? Tell me all about that.

RVG: At Newton. The old school is now a home. It only went to sixth grade. Then I attended seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth grade at Hoquiam. We rode buses. Right there at the crossing there were five of us big lugs. In the summer after my sophomore year we were at the Humptulips River swimming. We were walking home and this car stopped. The driver says, "Hey, you! Like a ride?" And we said, "We just live up the road a little ways." And he says, "Well, that doesn't matter. Hop in." So all five of us hopped in his car. Then, up the road, when we started to get out of the car, he says, "Just a minute. Do you boys play football in Hoquiam?" And I said, "No. If we're not on that bus at 2:30, it's 18 miles back out here and we're out of luck." And he said, "I'll tell you what: My name is Doug Dreeszen. I'm the football coach at Moclips. I'm also the bus driver and we never leave until after practice." So Bill Campbell and I transferred from Hoquiam High School to Moclips and played football for Doug! We played the Hoquiam B Squad. I knew all of the B Squad kids. And I knew quite a few of the B Squad kids in Aberdeen too. And the two years I was on the team we beat them both times. And when they came out to Moclips they brought half of their A squad too. In my senior year we beat the Aberdeen B squad 20-0 and Hoquiam's B squad 12-0. Gene "Cubby" Jackson, a Quinault Indian, was our team captain and quarterback. Doug Dreeszen was a good coach and a very popular guy—a big guy, too—6 foot 3 or 4.

JH: So Aberdeen had some "ringers" in there when they hit Moclips!

RVG: The ringer for us, if you'd ever been to that old school field at Moclips, was that it was filled with rocks. We knew where all the rocks were. They didn't. The field was right down behind the old school.

JH: Were you the Moclips High School "Hyaks" back then?

RVG: Yes, we were the Hyaks I was about six feet tall and when I graduated from high school I weighed about 190 pounds.

JH: You played 8-man football back then?

RVG: No, we played 11-man. We had about a team and a half. I was left guard—called the running guard. The running guard pulls out and blocks for the right end

runs. Corbett Shale and Ed Bock were two of the other boys on our team. We played Wishkah, Quinault, Westport and Naselle.[1]

JH: It's a long haul from Naselle to Moclips. What were the roads like in rural Grays Harbor in the 1930s?

RVG: Well, they'd done away with all the plank roads but there were plenty that were just rocks and chuckholes.

JH: So you attended Moclips High School for your junior and senior years?

RVG: Correct.

JH: Were you active in student government and activities during high school?

RVG: I was student body president at Moclips my senior year, 1938-39. When I came to Moclips High School from Hoquiam High School I was a big fish in a little pond. There were 156 kids in my sophomore class at Hoquiam and only 23 seniors at Moclips High School when I graduated in 1939.

JH: I read somewhere that it was once called the Moclips-Aloha High School.

RVG: I don't know how that Aloha got in there, but they were incorporated. Now it's the North Beach High School. Our school superintendent back then was Eli T. Moawad. The night I graduated–May 16, 1939—Mr. Moawad came up to me and said, "What are you going to do now that you've graduated, Chub?" My nickname was "Chub." Doug Dreeszen nicknamed me "Chub."

JH: Because you were chubby?

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[1] The members of the Moclips High School football team during the 1938 football season were: Delbert Jarvis, Robert Graham, Corbett Shale, Dewey Holcomb, Don Weese, Leland Mann, Dean Messinger, Bill Campbell, Orson Stillman, Roy Bergquist, Robert Jolly, Roy Hobaugh, Grant Pickett, Dell Van Rooy, Edmund Bock, Allen Bergquist, Carl Fowler, Freddie Saux and Gene Jackson.

RVG: 190 pounds. I'm only 175 now. But Mr. Moawad says to me, "What are you going to do now that you've graduated, Chub?" I said, "Well, I'll probably go to work in the shake mill with the family." And he said, *"I don't think so."* And I said, "Why not?" And he said, "Well, I'll tell ya: Tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock I'd like to have you put on your best bib and tucker, wash behind your ears, and we're going to Aberdeen." And I said, "What are we going to do there?" He said, "I'll show you when we get there." So we drove into Aberdeen and went up on the hill at Terrace Heights and drove up to that towering old grade school. We walked down the hall to Dean Tidball's office. Mr. Moawad told me on the way in, "I'm going to apply for a scholarship for you." But I didn't know what that was going to amount to. So we went in to see Dean Tidball, who greeted us and was just as friendly as he could be. And Eli, he was a car salesman! Eli had received a letter from Dean Tidball the afternoon I graduated, announcing the availability of the scholarship. He really did a sales job on why I should get the scholarship. But Lewis Tidball said, "I'm not being fair to all the other superintendents. I wrote to all of them—every superintendent in the three- or four-county area." But Eli just kept talking, and finally Dean Tidball said, "You know what? You've given such a good story here I'm going to give him the scholarship!"

JH: What a great story!

RVG: And I got the scholarship [in return for] firing the boiler in that old building. The kid who had that job before me was Eddie Smith, who became president of the college in the 1950s and served for 19 years. Here's another story: At that time at the crossing there were two stores: One belonged to Mr. Lewis. One of his sons was Jack Lewis who was one of my classmates at the Newton school. We went to Grays Harbor Junior College together. He was in Kappa Theta Tau and I was a Midshipman. Those were the two men's fraternities. John Forbes [a well-known newspaper and radio man on the Harbor] was our mentor. I got real active politically and Jack and I ran against one another for student body president. Both from Newton Grade School. That always struck me as a real oddity.

JH: Who won?

RVG: I beat him two to one.

JH: Were your dad and grandfather interested in politics during the depression—Hoover vs. Roosevelt?

RVG: No. All business.

JH: How about you? FDR, Landon, Willkie? Did all that interest you?

RVG: Well, I got interested in politics as a little kid at the Newton School, which was also where we had our Sunday School. Mrs. Patterson taught Sunday school there.

JH: Non-denominational Sunday school?

RVG: That's right. And on Sunday nights there'd be an itinerant preacher come and preach at the school. Mrs. Gouchnor—Lee Gouchnor was her husband—started a choir at our Sunday School. They were dairy people too.

JH: How many kids are we talking about, Bob?

RVG: Oh, about 15 kids at Sunday school. And Mrs. Gouchnor said, "Now that we're going to be an organization we want to do this democratically. We have to elect a president. I was 6 or 7 years old or maybe 8, and I said, "I want to run for president!" And by golly I was elected. I was the youngest one. As a matter of fact, she said, "Since you're the president you should have a blue sweater." Everybody else had a red sweater. Then at junior college, Dean Lewis Tidball …

JH: Tell me more about him. What kind of guy was Dean Tidball?

RVG: Well, at first I thought he was the grumpiest looking guy I'd ever seen in my life. Then when he started talking he was a very friendly person. He was a fine man. I lived out in the country at that time and school was starting in September of 1939. I told him I'd rent a room downtown or something. And he says, "Oh no. You're coming to live with us." I lived with him and his wife for the first two months of school. They lived up the hill from the school on Burleigh Avenue. After two months, Dean Tidball had a carpenter come in and build a little room under the stairs going up to the third floor of the school. They had a toilet in there and a wash bowl and room for a desk and little three-quarter bed.

The school was short on funding in its early years. Times were tough all over, especially on the Harbor. I knew a lot of people. I knew the unions and the mills, so I volunteered to go and talk to the unions and businesses around the area, saying that the school should really be financed. And I'd get contributions.

John Pearsall, a popular young Democrat from Aberdeen, had been elected to the Legislature. John had attended Grays Harbor Junior College and he was trying to get state aid for the junior colleges. Dean Tidball brought a bunch of us guys—student leaders—to Olympia to testify before the Legislature. The school didn't have any money to hire lobbyists. Our group included the student body presidents from the seven junior colleges around the state—Centralia, Mount Vernon, Yakima, Vancouver, Longview, Wenatchee and Grays Harbor. That was Dean Tidball's idea. We got together to talk over strategy. For some reason they nominated me to be the spokesman for our group. I was always the lead-off person before the legislative committees considering the bill. The final one was the Joint Higher Education Committee.

Nick Yantsin, an Aberdeen policeman who was studying at the college, was also part of our lobbying group. Nick's parents had fled Russia during the revolution. He was my debate partner at Grays Harbor Junior College. He was a fine orator. Our coach was A.J. Hillier, one of the top debate coaches in America. But there I was, testifying before the Legislature and I'm sure we made an impression on the legislators. It was John Pearsall, however, who sponsored the bill for two sessions and finally pushed through the legislation granting state aid for the junior colleges, which until then were private institutions. They were incorporated but they were not state funded. Later on they folded them into the school districts. John's first attempt was vetoed by the governor, but he wouldn't give up. The legislation he sponsored was a watershed. It led to our modern community college educational system in Washington State, which has improved hundreds of thousands of lives, including mine.

JH: That must have been exciting for a kid from Copalis Crossing to be testifying at the state Capitol.

RVG: It was. And Vic Meyers, the colorful lieutenant governor who had been a band leader, took us to lunch and showed us around. He was secretary of state when I first ran for state auditor in 1964.

JH: Let's backtrack a minute. Tell me more about the legendary A.J. Hillier. His debate teams won tournaments all over the West Coast. When you were on the debate team in 1940 and 1941, Grays Harbor JC debaters took on St. Martin's, Mount Vernon JC and Longview JC. The big event was at Linfield College in Oregon, with 400 college debaters from all over the West. Two out of three Grays Harbor JC teams reached the finals. Nick Yantsin took first place in men's oratory at a meet at College of Puget Sound.

RVG: Nick was really something! A.J. Hillier was a wry guy and a very brilliant man. He was a great public speaker himself. He taught me something that I remember to this day: "The difference between a democracy and a monarchy." [Graham begins to recite in a stentorian voice] "A monarchy is like a giant merchant man, riding high and dry on the sea. But by and by it strikes a rock and it goes down. But a democracy, on the other hand, is like a raft. It never, never sinks, but dammit your feet are always in the water!" A.J. Hillier taught me that!

Graham shares a joke with Hughes. Laura Mott Photo

JH: That's fabulous! What year did you graduate from Grays Harbor Junior College?

RVG: 1941. The college was still in the old grade school up on Terrace Heights. I lost my annual. If I had it I could give you more names of the people I went to school with. It was a nice annual, too. I can say that because I was the business manager! Everyone said it was the "biggest and best" annual that had ever been published in the first 10 years of the college. John Forbes was the faculty adviser to the annual staff. I spearheaded a campaign to solicit funds from downtown business and professional men to make the annual bigger than it had been.

JH: Was it called the "Nautilus" back then?

RVG: Yes, the "Nautilus."

JH: When did you meet this girl you've been married to for nearly 70 years?

RVG: When I came into Hoquiam for junior high I met Lloydine. Her dad, Lloyd "Pat" Ryan was a Hoquiam fireman.

Mrs. RVG: I am a year younger.

JH: Did you graduate from Hoquiam High School?

Mrs. RVG: *Oh, absolutely!* 1940.

RVG: Somebody published that I married a girl from Aberdeen!

JH: Perish the thought!

Tell me about where you were and what you thought on December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy"?

RVG: I remember it vividly. We had gone to Sunday School that morning at the Newton School. We had an aunt who lived at Pacific Beach where the old hotel used to be. We were on our way there to have dinner with my aunt and uncle. We heard it on the radio. They started to advertise that everyone should have their lights turned out because there could be Japanese invading all along the North Beach. We were all out there on the cliffs and beach to see if there were any Japanese coming.

JH: That wasn't far-fetched. A book written in 1909, "The Valor of Ignorance," predicted war with Japan by the 1940s and said one likely invasion spot would be the north and south beaches of Grays Harbor. I remember as a kid prowling the dunes at Westport and Ocean Shores and discovering World War II artillery emplacements.

RVG: Sure. All over the beaches. By the way, John, do you remember Perry Saito?

JH: The Japanese boy in Aberdeen whom everyone liked. He was sent to an internment camp after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

RVG: He was my best friend at Grays Harbor College! Perry belonged to Kappa Theta Tau, Jack Lewis's fraternity and Perry campaigned against Jack for me for student body president.

Graham's sophomore portrait at Grays Harbor Junior College in 1941. GHC Nautilus, 1941

JH: Perry Saito is the subject of a book by a friend of mine, Klancy Clark de Nevers. It's called "The Colonel and the Pacifist." Perry became a Methodist minister in Wisconsin. The colonel was Karl Bendetsen, who grew up in Aberdeen and ended up overseeing the interment of the Japanese during World War II. Bendetsen was Jewish, but hid it to gain admission to a fraternity at Stanford, and then ostensibly to not jeopardize advancement in the military.

RVG: We have the book. It's great.

Mrs. RVG: A good friend gave us the book. Perry's brother became a minister in Japan, and our good friends were in Japan for 22 years. The minister of the church she went to in Japan was Perry Saito's brother, the Rev. Lincoln Saito. Another amazing coincidence.

JH: Klancy's family ran the weekly *Grays Harbor Post* in Aberdeen. Her earlier book, "Cohassett Beach Chronicles," focuses on life along the South Beaches of Grays Harbor during World War II and the artillery unit stationed near Westport.

RVG: That's where Art Read was—the fellow who married one of Lloydine's best friends, Jo-Anne Duncan. He came up here to Westport with a National Guard unit from California. By the way, Perry's wife was an opera singer. I thought about him often during the war and over the years. He was a loyal American but a strong pacifist. One of my laments is that I never got to see Perry again. I deeply regret that. He died in 1985 after years of heart problems. He was only 64. That book is filled with the names of people we knew. Everyone should read it.

JH: When Japan attacked the United States were there many Japanese people on Grays Harbor?

RVG: No. Just a couple of families.

JH: Klancy is a very good researcher and writer. She interviewed me about Bendetsen and Joel Wolff, one of the leading businessmen on the Harbor. Wolff and Bendetsen were best friends growing up and attended synagogue together.

RVG: I knew Joel. Did you know Andy Janzik?

JH: I went to high school with his daughter.

RVG: I worked my way through college working for Janzik's garage. I ran the parking garage at night. And all the ladies of the night parked there. I used to park their cars for them after they came back from a night's work.

JH: We're talking about the old Aberdeen City Center Service garage near the Morck Hotel?

RVG: Yes.

JH: What kind of a guy was Perry Saito?

RVG: He was a prince. As a matter of fact, he wrote a page in my annual. Somebody once told me, "Never believe anything you read in an annual." But Perry wrote in mine, "I'm sure glad you got to be president, Bob. If Jack Lewis had got to be president that would have been bad." Perry was a good tennis player and an even better ping pong player. But you know what? I beat him a time or two! (Laughing) Perry was the sports editor for the *Nautilus* when I was business manager.

JH: What did you think as friends and classmates when the Saitos were sent to an internment camp?

RVG: I felt sick about it! It was horrifying. I thought, "My God! This cannot be happening here in free America."

Mrs. RVG: On Grays Harbor it didn't matter which nationality you were. You were all friends.

JH: Even with all the anti-Japanese feeling—"Remember Pearl Harbor!" "Slap a Jap!"—were the Saitos such good people that there was a common feeling that it was sad that they were being shipped off to an internment camp?

RVG: Oh yes! And Perry was a very popular guy at college. He dated all the gals.

JH: Tell me about how people of difference races got along. When you went to Moclips High School there was no high school at Taholah. Were there a lot of Indian kids at Moclips?

RVG: Yes. I graduated with the chief's son—Gene "Cubby" Jackson, the son of Cleve Jackson. Cubby was the captain and quarterback of our football team in our senior year.

JH: Also known as “Jughead” Jackson?

RVG: No, “Jughead” was Jim Jackson, Cubby’s older brother. Jim was a few years old than Cubby and I.

JH: So how many Indian kids were there at the school?

RVG: About 10 or 12 who came into high school at Moclips. There were 23 kids in all in my graduating class in 1939. Jughead Jackson in later years knew my brother Ralph in the shake business.

JH: And “Jug” Jackson became head of the Quinault Nation in the 1960s, before young Joe DeLaCruz.

RVG: That’s right. And I’ll tell you a story about Cubby Jackson: Before we graduated from Moclips High School, I said, “You know, Cubby, there’s one thing I’d love to do: I’d love to lift net with you.” He said, “Chub, you be on the beach along the river at 5 o’clock any morning of the week and you can lift net.” So next morning I get up bright and early and dressed like I was going to school—letterman’s sweater and all that—met Cubby and we went up the river in his canoe. He said, “Your job is to put the bow of the boat up over that net, then pull the net into the boat. And when it’s full you swish the slime off from it. By the time we were through I had the bottom of that boat filled with salmon. But I was one great big slime ball. Even though I skipped school that day it turned out to be an educational experience. I became so interested in those Quinault salmon that I went to the School of Fisheries at the University of Washington and talked with a friend who had graduated from Grays Harbor Junior College the year before—Ernie Salo. I did my term paper on that and I got an “A.”

JH: So you finish up at Grays Harbor Junior College in the spring of 1941. What did you do between then and when you entered the Army in 1942?

RVG: I was helping my uncle, Vernon Kuhns, with his dairy, Firland Dairy, up the Wishkah Road [just north of Aberdeen]. I used to take the road from Wishkah over to the Wynooche Valley to pick up milk. I also spent some time with my folks at Copalis Crossing and worked at the lumber mill in Aloha. I was drafted in

August of 1942. 3-9-1-8-5-2-2-3! That was my Army serial number. (Laughing that he still can recite it by heart.)

JH: Tell me what happens next?

RVG: Fort Lewis. We got all sorts of examinations there. I had a very satisfactory interview since I'd had two years of college. They said I could have a choice of service. I said I wanted to be in the Army Air Forces, so they took me and gave me another examination. They discovered I was color blind, so that left out my chances of becoming a pilot. But they said there's the position of observer, which can utilize some special qualities of eyesight that can see camouflage. But that didn't sound too interesting. They said another possibility is flight engineer—aerial engineer. A flight engineer had a lot to do, and most people didn't understand the responsibility we had, especially when we got to larger planes. But even when they were small. The pilot was on the left, the co-pilot on the right and the flight engineer sat on a little jump-seat in the middle. I ran the throttles and gear up and gear down—all that business.

JH: What kind of airplanes are we talking about?

RVG: We started out with DC-3's.

JH: "Gooney Birds" as they were nicknamed. The military version was the C-47, a versatile light transport plane.

RVG: I even flew in a C-87 if you can tell me what that was! It was a stripped down B-24 bomber converted to transport duty. They stripped the armor off. But it went so slow you could hardly fly it. We flew to Hawaii and the South Pacific in those things.

JH: That's a new one on me. When I was in the Air Force in the 1960s the C-47 was still a workhorse. Let's see: The B-17 was "The Flying Fortress." The B-24 was "The Liberator" and the B-24 was the "Mitchell" in honor of General Billy Mitchell.

RVG: And the B-26 bomber was nicknamed the "Flying Prostitute" or "No visible means of support" because it had such small wings. The early models were prone to hard landings.

JH: They also called it the "Widowmaker" for the same reason. Was the Doolittle Raid on the Japanese homeland in the spring of 1942 a big morale booster?

RVG: Oh yeah! We all cheered. I was sent to Sheppard Field, Texas, for flight engineer school. Wichita Falls, it was said, was the only place in the world where you can be knee deep in mud and still have dust blow in your face. As a matter of fact, they had transient real estate people. They sold the Panhandle when it moved south in the morning and resold it when it blew north in the evening.

JH: Having been to Wichita Falls, I'd say that's not too far-fetched!

RVG: I spend several months there at A&M School—Airplane Mechanics.

JH: So you did Airplane Mechanics School before you did Flight Engineer?

RVG: Yes. I didn't really feel I had an aptitude for mechanics but that's what I fell into. It was very interesting. I also went to Rantoul, Illinois, for Instrument Specialist School at Chanute Field. Captain Lutey was the captain of my section. He picked five of us guys to send to Douglas Aircraft R2000 Radial Engine School in Hartford, Connecticut. When we came back from there I was at Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base in the San Francisco Bay area. It's now Travis Air Force Base.

JH: My Uncle Charles McSpadden, who worked at the Anderson & Middleton Sawmill in Aberdeen, became a waist gunner on a B-17, flying missions into the Third Reich from England. I think it's so interesting that McSpadden and Graham—two young guys from Grays Harbor—are off to see the world in the most perilous of times.

RVG: Before the war, we never imagined it! As soon as we got back from Connecticut, Douglas Aircraft had just completed manufacturing the C-54's—the large, four-engine transport.

JH: "The Skymaster."

RVG: That's what I was assigned to. Early on at Travis my job was to maintain and repair those R2000 radial engines. I was one of the 52 men that activated that

base. We were sent over from Hamilton Field, California near Novato. And that's when she got in the picture (gesturing toward Mrs. Graham). She was going to the University of Washington.

Mrs. RVG: I was "in the picture" before that. We had known each other since junior high, and we had dated.

JH: But by then you were two young people in love, separated by a war.

RVG: Absolutely.

JH: Hey, she didn't say anything. (Laughter)

Mrs. RVG: Our first date was to see Hoquiam play for the state basketball championship in 1939.

RVG: I had to ask her mother for permission because we were going to Seattle. When I was at Grays Harbor Junior College, Bud Hesla from Aberdeen, whose sister was the dean of women, said to me one night, "Come on, Chub, we're going to go down to the tav tonight and have a beer. Why don't you join the group?" But I said, "No, I can't because I have a date with Lloydine." And he says, "Watch it, Chub, if you don't look out you're going to wind up being a married man!"

JH: I gather, Mrs. Graham, that you were named in honor of your father. Did you have a nickname?

Mrs. RVG: No. It was just Lloydine.

RVG: A lot of times I just called her "Lloyd." And I've always said: "She may have been her father's disappointment, but she was my joy."

Mrs. RVG: We've had a really wonderful life. We've been so many places and met so many interesting people.

JH: We navigated away from you at flight school at Travis Field with the new C-54's. That must have been intensive.

RVG: It was. We had to learn things that most people wouldn't think about, such as fuel consumption. That was my total responsibility. I could tell the flight captain to turn around, "You're not going any farther."

JH: You made good rank in the space of three years, Bob. Technical sergeant. Was that E-6?

RVG: E-6. Well, we made some good rank, especially as an air crew member on C-54's.We never knew where we were going to be flying. They were shuttle missions. A shuttle service. All cargo—everything out of Travis Field and Hamilton Field. There'd be a team of five on the crews. I was with the Pacific Wing of the Air Transport Command.

JH: Tell us what a shuttle is.

RVG: The first leg of the shuttle would be from Travis to Hickam Field in Hawaii. Then when we got off the plane there, there'd be a crew standing by to fly the next leg, hauling stuff deeper into the Pacific. On some missions, we'd refuel and keep going. We found out later that part of the stuff we were hauling was part of the atomic bomb system—taking materiel out to Tinian and Saipan. It was stockpiled there to assemble the bombs.

JH: How many aircraft were you conversant with?

RVG: C-54's, C-47's, C-87's. Our commanding officer had a B-26, and he used to take me flying in that—it was such a hot airplane. But while I was at the base my main job was what we called "line chief." I was in charge of 10 or 12 teams who worked on planes. I'd supervise maintenance.

JH: So I want to be clear. Let's go back to 1943. Does 1943 find Bob Graham out of technical schools and being a flight engineer?

RVG: Yes.

JH: Were you at a lot of different bases?

RVG: Every island we shuttled to had a base. There was hardly an island in the Pacific I wasn't on. After Hawaii, Eniwetok was one stop, then Kwajalein. And Johnson Island. I had to haul rock in there so they could build that thing up to make an airstrip on it.

JH: So there were these decisive island-by-island battles, from Midway on, as the U.S. forces slowly advanced across the Pacific, ever closer to the Japanese homeland. Our goal was to secure bases for strategic bombing or invasion. And your crews were bringing in the supplies?

RVG: Yes. On the shuttle flights, as soon as one plane would land, you'd refuel it and take it on to the next stop with a fresh air crew. I never had to stay in one place very long. Sometimes we'd shuttle along the South Route to Wake; another time we'd go to the North Route to the Marshalls. The Marshalls took us into Japan.

JH: How far did you push?

RVG: Late '44 and '45 we were getting closer and closer.

JH: Were people ever shooting at you out there in the Pacific?

RVG: No. We had what they called IFF—Identification Friend or Foe. A radio beacon that we had on. But the Japanese got so smart that sometimes they came in unbeknownst to air crews. They'd come down and bomb the runway out behind you. That didn't happen to us. We were lucky.

JH: Were never assigned to just one C-54?

RVG: No. And when after you got back to the states—to Travis—and you were assigned to the next flight, you would be assigned to a new five-man crew. It wouldn't be the same crew.

JH: Not like my Uncle Charles in the 8th Air Force, where the crews stayed pretty much together on one aircraft. That must have been fascinating for you—meeting all those guys from around the country. Did you still make some lasting friendships?

RVG: Oh, good friends. Matter of fact, one guy we always kidded him because he didn't want to use up all the runway. He liked to land on a short runway. We had nickname for him that I can't tell you right now. (chuckling)

JH: Kind of obscene?

RVG: Yeah!

JH: Was everybody about the same age on those crews?

RVG: No. I'll show you my Station 10, Pacific Wing, Army Air Forces Transport Command annual, "Wings over the Pacific." I was in what was known as Section A. Captain Lutey was the commanding officer. Tom H. Lutey from Vancouver, Washington. Good guy!

(Graham displays the booklet)

JH: What's that insignia on your service cap?

RVG: That's the Air Transport Command insignia.

JH: I've never seen that before. Never seen that insignia worn on a service cap. And here's a photo of General Hap Arnold. What a guy, eh Bob?

RVG: Oh yeah!

JH: Did you ever have a chance to meet him.

RVG. Never did. Everybody worshipped him.

JH: Do you have your old uniform?

RVG: I have the jacket. And you know what? I can still wear it!

JH: Did a lot of those planes have names?

RVG: Yes they did. I remember one named after Texas. Notice that there's all different sections of the command—different groups. There's even a section for women—WACs—and there's a section for blacks.

JH: You were segregated. But did you have interaction with black GI's?

RVG: Yes. In my section we had to go a long ways to go to a movie. But Section D, the blacks, had a closer place to see movies. So I'd go there. There was no problem. In fact, I never saw any racial incidents during the war. A lot of the females, by the way, were airplane mechanics. Good ones. And on one flight I ran into a nurse who was from Hoquiam—Harriet Ashenfelder. Those nurses were great. We never knew what kind of cargo we were going to haul, but the return trips were universally carrying sick and wounded men. And I mean they were *sick and wounded*. There were always a number of nurses on board, and they were great, but they had their hands full. Inside a C-54, there'd be two rows of litter cases in the middle; then there was an aisle on each side, and another row of litter cases, five high, the length of the airplane. Our motto was "We always deliver the goods." To me, that particularly precious cargo came with a real feeling of accomplishment and an appreciation for the overall struggle we were in. I felt we were really doing something important in the Transport Command. …I felt lucky to be alive."

JH: Did you ever have any fighter escorts?

RVG: No. The fighters were all carrier-based aircraft. We were on our own.

JH: Any close calls out there in the Pacific—when you had an engine malfunction? When you were spotted by enemy planes?

RVG: No. We were lucky. The only thing we had happen was on a short landing strip when the pilot put it right into the ocean! We ran clear off the end of the runway right into the ocean. He made too fast an approach. I put on all the emergency brakes, but we ripped the tires off the landing gear—blew out all the tires—and we went right into the ocean. Not very far, but far enough. That was on Kwajalein. Some of those islands were so small you could go over to look out at the ocean, stand there, then look back to see the waves coming ashore on the

other side. They called them atolls—a coral reef that's not much of an island. But we got out OK and it was hotter than a pistol.

JH: What did you think as you were speeding toward the great gray Pacific Ocean?

RVG: Well, "It's gonna come sooner or later!"

JH: You mean, "Maybe my number's up"? "Please Lord, let me out of this one!"

RVG: Exactly. Then when we got out OK, we thought, "Oh man, it's going to be good to have a shower"! There were no real showers. You went out in the middle of the compound and stood under a salt-water pipe. There was no soap! And by the time we got back to our quarters I was just stiff from standing under the salt water.

JH: While you transported a lot of gravely wounded guys, you never saw any real combat?

RVG: You know what? I never fired a gun when I was in the service. Not even in training. They were slugging us into different training schools so fast that firearms training wasn't in the picture.

JH: So it's the spring of 1945: Germany has surrendered and we're moving closer to the Japanese homeland. Where are you then?

RVG: Still flying those shuttle missions. I got a leave in August of 1945. A two-week furlough and came home to the Harbor to see my family, and Lloydine, of course. We were waiting for the war to be over before we got married. But after I was home for a few days I told her, "Lloydine, it may be a long time before this darn war is over. Maybe we should get married." And she said, "I think we should." And I said, "When?" And she said, "Sunday."

Grahams display their wedding picture.

Mrs. RVG: We had three days to plan our wedding. I found a dress I liked at a little shop in Aberdeen.

JH: It's a beautiful dress, and so was the bride.

Mrs. RVG: When I hear about brides today taking months to arrange everything I think to myself, "That's too much time." Ours turned out fine and the church was packed.

RVG: I went on over to the Hoquiam Presbyterian Church and asked if we could get married there. But the pastor was on vacation. So I thought, "Well, that's the book." But I knew there was a Methodist Church around the corner. I walked over and told the pastor, Howard P. Buck, my sad story and asked if he would marry us. He said he sure would.

JH: Lloydine, did you get any resistance from your parents?

Mrs. RVG: No. My dad was especially thrilled. My sister and I were so old.

JH: How old were you?

Mrs. RVG: 22.

RVG: He thought he was going to have two old maids! We got married on Sunday, August, 12, 1945, in the Hoquiam First Presbyterian Church by a Methodist minister. The Japanese surrendered two days later. So we always reasoned that *we* caused the war to end because we were going to wait until the war was over to get married. My uncle had just bought himself a new Chevrolet and he loaned it to us so we could take it on our honeymoon.

JH: As timing goes, that had to be one of the happiest honeymoons in history. Where did you go?

RVG: Seattle!

Mrs. RVG: First Olympia, then Seattle. We were in Seattle when the Japanese surrender was announced. People were dancing in the streets and all the girls were grabbing service men and giving them hugs and kisses. So I said to Bob, who was in uniform, "We're going to a movie!"

JH: Seattle was not very far away, by today's standards, but far enough in 1945 for newlyweds from Grays Harbor. It was not farfetched of you to think that the Japanese might hold on until the last banzai charge. It wasn't until six days after the second atomic bomb that they finally surrendered. There's quite a debate that still rages over whether President Truman should have dropped the bomb—the second one in particular. Do you have any feelings about that, Bob?

RVG: The balance was that if he hadn't dropped the bombs there would have been a heckuva lot more killed.

JH: Thinking back did you have any qualms about the use of that weapon?

RVG: Well, it was a frightening thing, but I agreed with Truman.

JH: After your leave was up you still had to go back to your base in California?

RVG: Oh yes. I went right back to Hamilton Field. We were still making trips—crewing up. On New Year's Eve 1945 we were assigned to take off with a crew to head to the Pacific. On that route we were to go to the Marshall Islands in Micronesia, then into Atsugi, Japan. Meantime, Lloydine's sister June had got married in December to a guy she had met at Washington State College. His name was Ted Reder. He was in a fighter group. All I knew was his name. I'd never even seen a picture of him. Then on the 5th of January, 1946, we arrived in Atsugi. Some of the crew said, "Let's just get our billets and get a few hours' sleep." But I thought I'd like to go into the city and see what the city was like. So we were standing on a dock in a rice paddy. The dock was just covered with Japanese natives and GI's. I was standing there looking things over. Our radio man was standing next to me on one side and there was another GI on the other side. And I said to our radio man, "You know, I wouldn't trade this whole damn island for an acre in Washington!" And this GI next to me says, "Pardon me. Did you say 'Washington'?" I said, "I sure did." And he said, "Where you from in Washington?" And I said, "You know where Aberdeen is?" And he said, "I sure do. I just married a girl from Hoquiam." I said, "Just a minute. Hold on. Your name can't be Ted Reder, can it?" "Yes it is! You're not Bob Graham are you?" So I met my brother-in-law, who I'd never before seen, in the middle of a rice paddy in Japan!"

JH: Incredible. What are the odds of that?

RVG: Phenomenal! Anyway, on January 6, June's birthday, Ted and I got on this little narrow-gauge electric train and went to Atsugi. We found a telegraph office and send Lloydine's sister a telegram. And that was the first time they knew where he was and that we were together.

Mrs. RVG: I still get quivers thinking about that telegram.

RVG: Then when my plane was getting ready to leave Atsugi and the gas truck pulled up to gas us up, I looked down at the tarmac and it was my old gas man from Travis! I said, "Hey, you got extra gas?" So I got our pilot and co-pilot and navigator all together and they figured that with the extra fuel we could fly over Hiroshima on the way to the Philippines.

JH: What did ground zero for the first atomic bomb look like?

RVG: It was surreal. I thought to myself, "That's something pretty powerful. Something pretty terrible."

JH: Hundreds of thousands of people—many of them vaporized. But those were the lucky ones. Thousands of survivors had radiation poisoning and terrible burns.

RVG: Yeah. Terrible.

JH: You're a Christian person, Bob. In the wake of the war have you thought a lot about man's inhumanity to man? And terrible weapons?

RVG: Oh yeah. But I guess there will always be war.

JH: And "rumors of war." When do you muster out of the service?

RVG: I had applied for officer training school and been accepted. But I got a discharge on January 31, 1946. There was a point system on how soon you would be discharged now that the war was over. I got out earlier than many.

JH: So Tech. Sgt. Robert V. Graham, U.S. Army, 39185223, is going to be a civilian. You carried home a lot of maimed and dying boys. During the war did you say your prayers every night and thank your lucky stars you came home alive and well?

RVG: Oh yes! My mother was a prayer warrior. Her primary prayer was for our family, that the chain would not be broken—our family chain. That was always the way she put it, that "the chain would not be broken." My brother Ralph—"Moonie"—was in four different prisoner of war camps in Germany. He was taken prisoner during the Battle of the Bulge and was one of five to escape a Nazi firing squad. The other 25 GI's who were captured with him in Belgium were lined up and shot. But her sons made it home. The chain was not broken.

JH: Did you go to work for the state right after you were discharged from the Army?

RVG: That's the segment we've overlooked so far: How I ended up at the State Auditor's Office. After I got out of the service, Lloydine's uncle, Guy Ryan, was retiring. He owned, in partnership, the largest medical/dental laboratory in Los Angeles. He was having kind of a rough time with his partner anyway. He said, "Bob, rather than going back to Washington I want you to come and live with us in Glendale and start taking over that laboratory. The first thing you're going to do is go through six-months' training in the lost-wax method of manufacturing. I did that, and when I graduated from I was set to go into the laboratory. I came home that night and said to Lloydine, "Do you like it here in California?" And she said, "No, not too much. Do you?" And I said, "You know, I *hate it* down here!" And she said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" "We're going back to Washington. And we're going to go to Olympia. I've always wanted to live there." So we did. I went to the State Personnel Office and put my name in for a state job. That was in 1947. I went to work for the Department of Labor & Industries. I worked there for a year as a claims adjustor for people who were injured in industrial accidents. I worked for a guy named Don Yoakum. He was the assistant director of the Department of Labor & Industries. He was transferring over to the Office of the Budget. I said, "Boy, that would be a nice place to work." He said, "You're hired, right now." After three months you automatically got a pay raise—probably $25 more a month.

JH: What were you earning?

RVG: About $300 a month. Anyway, when the printed payroll came in with everybody listed in the office, my name had a big red line through it? I wasn't scheduled for my raise.

JH: How come?

RVG: That's what I thought. But I didn't say anything. Next month, same thing. Third month, another red line. So I thought, "Well, that does it." I walked down the hall to the office of the director of the office, Joe Pachot. I told his secretary, Kate, that I very much wanted to see Joe as soon as possible. She said he had someone with him but he was about finished, so sit tight. Finally, I was ushered in. And I said, "Well, Joe, I have really enjoyed working here and it's the kind of work I like but since my name has been red-lined for a salary increase for three months that must mean either you don't like me or my work or something. But whatever it is, I resign. Joe said, "When?" And I said, "About five minutes ago." I went back to my office, put all my private things in a cardboard box, walked out and stood on the back steps and looked over at the Capitol Building and thought, "Boy, Graham, you're out of a job!" So I walked over to the Capitol building, went down to the cafeteria in the basement and had a cup of coffee. Then I walked down the hall and there was a sign on a door that said, "State Auditor's Division of Municipal Corporations, Lawrence Hubble, chief examiner." I thought, "Well, Lloydine's folks knew a Lawrence Hubble in Hoquiam. My God, this is fate!" So I swung the door open, walked in and told the secretary, "I have no appointment, but I'd sure like to meet Mr. Hubble." She said, "He's right here, right now." Lawrence took me in his office, and I told him the story about why I'd left Labor & Industries. I told him that working for the Auditor's Office was something I was really interested in. I even told him that during school I'd written that I hoped to further my education in either accounting or law and apply it somewhere in government. Lawrence said, "You're in luck, Bob." Wally Dimon, the assistant to the chief examiner of the municipal division, was leaving the agency to become a partner in a law firm. Saturday was Wally's last day. Everyone worked on Saturday in those days. Hubble said he'd like to take me upstairs to meet Cliff Yelle, the state auditor. It was this beautiful big office with tapestries, and I thought, "My God, what am I doing here? I'm from Copalis Crossing!" Lawrence told Cliff the story about me leaving Labor & Industries and my background in college and the

service. Back then everything was political patronage. Cliff asked me a bunch of questions and talked about the office. Finally, Cliff Yelle looked at me with a squint in his eye and said, "Bob, what kind of a Democrat are you?" [Graham chuckles at the memory] I said, *"I'm a Cliff Yelle Democrat!"* And the next words that came out of his mouth were "Hire him, Lawrence!" I got hired right then and there.

JH: I can't make up a story that good! Truth be told, did you have strong political leanings? Practically everybody in Grays Harbor County was a Democrat—at least after 1929—when you were growing up. Did you consider yourself a Democrat?

RVG: That's how I felt. The Democrats were the working man's party. My roots were working-class people. I had gone to the unions and mills when I was at Grays Harbor Junior College, asking them to donate to help support the school. I told them how important it was to have that college on the Harbor, and money was short. I got a lot of donations. They kicked in a pretty good amount of money. So those were my political roots. I came to really admire Cliff Yelle. I worked for him for 17 years.

Mrs. RVG: And his son married my cousin!

RVG: So we were finally slightly related!

JH: Cliff Yelle, who became your friend and mentor, was state auditor for 32 years—eight consecutive terms. When you took that oath of office in 1965 to succeed Yelle as state auditor you must have reflected on your journey from being a kid growing up during the Depression at Copalis Crossing—literally a wide spot in the road—to one of the most important elected offices in the state.

RVG: I said at the time that it "seemed an awesome thing." Cliff Yelle told me in 1963 that he was going to retire. I wrote that I was faced with a tough decision at "the major crossroads of my government career: whether to remain on the staff and take my chances when a new man came in"—I should have said "man or woman"!—after the election or run for the auditor's job myself. I'd held every major administrative post in the agency. A news story at the time said that "after strong encouragement from Yelle," I chose to run. It was a hard-fought primary but I went on to win election with a 200,000-vote plurality. I never lost an

election—from president of the Newton Sunday School Choir, to student body president at Moclips and Grays Harbor Junior College and seven runs for state auditor. I served three or four terms as elder of the Westminster Presbyterian Church here in Olympia. And I was Sunday School Superintendent for nine years.

JH: What is the No. 1 thing you are most proud of from your 28 years as Washington State auditor?

RVG: Well, during my years we brought the office into the modern era, and I put together a great team. We were fair and honest. The auditor and the auditee are often pretty difficult to bring together. But invariably I was able to bring people to the point where they felt I was one of them—and that they would be treated fairly. That's the thing I'm most proud of. But we also had fraud investigation courses. We received national awards for our accounting department. I always said that we were the "Largest CPA firm in the state." The federal General Accounting Office said our agency was one of the top 10 government accounting offices in the United States.

JH: And you started doing performance audits [in 1967], which created a big brouhaha from opponents of giving the auditor's office that leeway. They said you lacked legislative authority.

RVG: Oh yes. But that debate started when I was Cliff Yelle's deputy. The cities and towns wanted their audits to be conducted by private accountants instead of the state auditor. We put a veto referendum on it—Referendum 33 in 1962. The proposal was overwhelmingly rejected by the voters. [69.94 percent] In the 1980s, my office fought off another audit privatization attempt.

JH: In your estimation, who were the finest public servants, elected officials, you served with over the years?

RVG: You'll probably be surprised when I tell you, but Dan Evans was probably my favorite politician. Very progressive and fair-minded. And John Cherberg, of course, the lieutenant governor. We got to be really good friends. Whenever Cherberg had a dignitary coming to his office to entertain he'd call me and have me come up.

JH: Did Bob and Lloydine Graham have kids?

RVG: Four boys and one girl! Randy Graham is the oldest. He is the facilities coordinator for the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs. Next is Susan Leslie Graham Cahill. She is in the federal funding unit of the Washington State Department of Social & Health Services. She is a financial services specialist for children, foster care and adoption support. The third one is Paul Robert Graham. He works for Fish & Wildlife in the statewide program of salmon tagging. Next is Jim Graham, who is a cosmetologist at the Ritz Hair Salon in Olympia. He comes out and does his mother's hair. The last one is Richard Scott Graham. He was footloose and fancy but he has done as well as any of our other kids. He has a pallet company.

JH: Grandchildren?

RVG: We have 12 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren—actually 13 and two of them are still in the oven! The wonderful part of being here in Olympia is that we see our kids, grandchildren and great-grandchildren a lot.

JH: I met Tom Brokaw when he was interviewing Bob Bush from South Bend, who received the Medal of Honor for his heroism as an 18-year-old Navy corpsman on Okinawa in 1945. Bush is in Brokaw's best-seller, *The Greatest Generation*.

RVG: I knew Bob. A fine man.

JH: We're all going to die someday, but we're now losing 500 members of your generation every day. Which is one reason I wanted to do an oral history with you. Does that "Greatest Generation" label ring right with you?

RVG: I hold Tom Brokaw way up there. "Greatest Generation" is kind of flattery in a way. But I feel we really did something. Individually and collectively. We stepped up."

Mrs. RVG: We were all drawn close together by the war, culturally and emotionally. I think our kids today are having knowledge beyond what we had ever dreamed. But it's how that gets used that will matter.

RVG: She's right. As usual.

JH: There was the double whammy of the war after the collapse in the Depression.

Mrs. RVJ: We didn't have much to collapse!

RVG: Aberdeen and Hoquiam, with all the mills and the port, was hit hard by the Depression. But as kids growing up in the rural areas, we never knew there was a Depression. My granddad had the dairy. And we butchered livestock and had eggs.

JH: Unemployment probably topped 35 percent. But old timers have always told me nobody went hungry on the Harbor during the Depression. There were clams to dig; fish to catch and game in the woods. Then the Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration came along to provide some jobs.

RVG: I remember when the Dust Bowl people started coming in their battered cars, with kids hanging all over them. Grays Harbor seemed like a great place. If they really put their muscle to it they could earn $5 a day cutting a cord of pulp wood. They felt they were in fat city compared to Oklahoma.

JH: Thank you both so much for talking with us.

RVG: Thank you!